

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 02765 191440Z

64

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 CU-04 OMB-01 NIC-01 OPR-02 DRC-01 /125 W

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R 191215Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7510

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 2765

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT SU

SUBJ: STUDENT/POLITICAL UNREST

1. SUMMARY: POLICE DEC 18-19 MOVED AGAINST STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN STAGING SIT-INS IN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS SINCE DEC 16. APPARENTLY BELIEVING STUDENT ACTIVITY ORGANIZED BY OPPOSITION FORCES, GOS LIKEWISE REPORTEDLY ARRESTED SOME 80 FORMER POLITICIANS AND OTHER KNOWN OPPONENTS OF REGIME EVENING DEC 18. GOVERNMENT STILL SEEMS VERY MUCH IN CONTROL, BUT BACKWASH FOLLOWING UNIVERSITY TAKEOVER CLEARLY MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN FIRST HOPED. END SUMMARY.

2. HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THREE TOWN AREA, AND REPORTEDLY ALSO WAD MEDANI, TOOK OVER NUMBER SCHOOLS DEC 16. DEMANDS PRESENTED INCLUDED NOT ONLY SUCH CHESTNUTS AS RELEASE AUGUST/SEPTEMBER DETAINEES AND RECOGNITION STUDENT UNION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, BUT ALSO SUCH PRACTICAL ISSUE AS POSTPONEMENT OF EXAMS TO ALLOW MORE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE UP LOST STUDY TIME. GOVERNMENT RESPONDED WITH APPEAL THAT SIT-INS END, NOTING THAT CONTINUATION WOULD MEAN LESS OF FULL SCHOOL YEAR. DESPITE THIS LOW-KEY HANDLING, ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS OCCUPIED DEC 17, BOTH IN THREE TOWNS AND REPORTEDLY ELSEWHERE IN COUNTRY. FATHERS THEN URGED

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PAGE 02 KHARTO 02765 191440Z

TO BRING SONS HOME. THIS LIKEWISE FAILED.

3. ON EVENING DEC 18 GOS, WHICH HAD LEFT STUDENTS ALONE WITHOUT EVEN POLICE CORDONS UTILIZED AGAINST UNIVERSITY, APPARENTLY DECIDED OCCUPY HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH POLICE. IN KHARTOUM PROPER, TAKEOVER APPARENTLY ACHIEVED WITH LITTLE DIFFICULTY, BUT OMDURMAN STUDENTS RESISTED. SOME HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS NEVERTHELESS TAKEN OVER BY POLICE AND PROCESS CONTINUING MORNING DEC 19. MEANWHILE, EJECTED STUDENTS REGROUPED ON STREET INTENT ON CONTINUING DISTURBANCES. OMDURMAN SUQ CLOSED AS STONE-THROWING STUDENTS MOVED THROUGH THIS AM.

4. GOVERNMENT ALSO REPORTEDLY ARRESTED SOME 80 FORMER POLITICIANS EVENING DEC 18. THESE INCLUDED AT LEAST FOUR EX-MINISTERS AS WELL AS OTHER PROMINENT FIGURES. ACTION PRESUMABLY BASED ON GOS BELIEF THAT COMMON NATURE STUDENT ACTION, BANNERS AND SLOGANS CLEARLY INDICATIVE OF ORGANIZED CONSPIRACY. HENCE KNOWN OPPONENTS BEING ROUNDED UP.

5. COMMENT: WHILE SITUATION SOMEWHAT MORE DIFFICULT THAN APPEARED EARLY IN WEEK, GOS STILL VERY MUCH IN CONTROL AND THERE NO INDICATIONS OTHER FORCES CURRENTLY JOINING STUDENTS IN STREET ACTION. IRRESPECTIVE PRECISE NUMBER REGIME'S OPPONENTS ARRESTED, ACTION CLEARLY REFLECTS BOTH REGIME'S SENSITIVITY TO WHAT IT NO DOUBT VIEWS AS ORGANIZED CAMPAIGN AGAINST IT, AND ITS DECISION TAKE NO CHANCES RE EXTENT ANY ACTUAL THREAT. BREWER

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